

Orem to study paramedic plan

By Michael Morris

Deseret News staff writer

OREM — Utah law requires that two paramedics be aboard every ambulance responding to an emergency call. Orem City believes it is more efficient to operate ambulances with one paramedic and an emergency medical technician. A second paramedic — a cross-trained police officer — arrives about the same time in a separate vehicle.

A study of Orem's plan has been recommended by the state's Paramedic Advisory Committee.

Orem used the paramedic/EMT system until last July, when the state Emergency Medical Services Committee insisted that Orem comply with the law, ruling that the

waiver under which the city had operated for a number of years had given Orem ample time to come into compliance.

Orem has since complied with the state law. But Orem Department of Public Safety officials met last December with EMS committee representatives, requesting a different interpretation of the two-paramedic law, and requesting that a state regulation be changed so the city's Public Safety Department could conduct a study of its emergency medical services and have a chance to prove the viability of the Orem system.

The Paramedic Advisory Committee rejected a preliminary study earlier this year, but this week approved plans for a more comprehensive study that incorporates suggestions given to the city by the paramedic

committee.

Orem officials will present the study proposal to the state's Emergency Medical Services Committee on July 1. If the EMS committee approves, Orem will have a year to conduct the study.

By adopting its cross-training program, which trains firefighters and police officers in all police, fire and emergency medical functions, city officials believe they can make more effective use of current manpower and save taxpayers dollars by reducing the number of emergency personnel needed by the city. Currently, there are three paramedics in the fire division also trained and certified as police officers.

See OREM on B-5

el in many places.
Payson also got its share of slides.
e can see 27 new slides this year from
ad," he said.

ically, Watkins said one of the most
lt things this year was simply waiting
e floods.

knew it (the flooding) was coming,
last year's surprise. We got ulcers
ing the high snow level and waiting for
ome."

Councilman Steve Hansen agreed
e flooding this year was worse. "I took
up the canyon and it scared me when I
ow high the muddy water line was on
ees. It really was an emergency. I be-
however, that the efforts of Rod (Wat-
city workers and volunteers prevented
or disaster."

had tremendously dedicated people
ed in protecting Payson City, working
ours. Rod and city workers many
put in 20 to 22 hours at a stretch," said
Gary D. Tassainer.

alarms that sounded in Orem during
1983, 1,126 were false — costing the city
\$14,000 and wasting 628 man-hours to re-
spond to them.

Those figures, which are being repeat-
ed this year — only six of 427 alarms to
date have proved valid — have prompt-
ed Orem officials to revise a chapter in
the city code so that alarm users will be
required to post a cash bond after their
second false alarm within any six-month
period.

Paul Johnson, assistant city attorney,
said the city will use the bond to try to
ensure that no additional false alarms
occur at the same place during the six
months after a first false alarm. If no
additional false alarms occur during the
six months, the \$50 bond will be
returned.

Johnson said, however, that if addi-
tional false alarms occur during the six-

Mosher said about 65 percent of the
false alarms were a result of employee
error, while the remaining 35 percent
were due to mechanical failure. He said
he believes alarm users can correct the
problem because some premises with
alarm systems never have false alarm
problems.

"I think there are a lot of alarms in the
community that need to be updated,"
said Ted Peacock, public safety director.

"We think that it's (code revision) pret-
ty reasonable," said Johnson. "Nonethe-
less, they're (alarm users) going to be
dinged enough to get the right equipment
and to get their people properly trained."

According to the revision, exceptions
to the new ruling include the sounding of
false alarms related or resulting from a
power failure, phone lines being severed
or from water surges through a fire
alarm system.

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